

REMARKS

Claims 2-3 and 5-6 remain in this application. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1 and 4 are canceled above, and the rejections of these claims are moot.

Independent claim 2 is now rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with various dependent claims, as unpatentable over the Bleuel et al. and Fevre et al. patents relied on previously in view of newly applied European patent document 0 823 296 to Podhorsky et al. Reconsideration is requested.

The Bleuel et al. patent concerns an adjustable steering column in which attachment of projections to a column jacket is performed by welding. The projections formed according to the present invention are needed for the crimping act or operation specified and include flat inner surfaces. The outside of a column jacket associated with an inside of one of the projections is also flat. Such flat projections serve to facilitate positioning of the bracket to the column jacket as the columns are assembled, since the two parallel flat faces conform to the individual flat faces of the column jacket. In conjunction with the flat column jacket surfaces, moreover, the projections make it possible to completely join the bracket to the column jacket without excessive deformation of the column jacket. Nothing in the Bleuel et al. patent disclosure suggests a steering column assembly method including, in combination with the others specified, the “crimping” act or operation now particularly defined by claim 2.

The Fevre et al. patent discloses a bracket having no protection at its upper end. Attachment of the bracket to a column jacket is performed by welding or crimping. However, there is nothing in the Fevre et al. patent disclosure to suggest fitting flat projections on the bracket along flat surfaces of a column jacket or modifying the Bleuel et al. device such that it is made by an assembly method including the “crimping” act or operation mentioned above.

The Podhorsky et al. publication concerns heat exchangers in which attachment of ribs to tubes is performed by crimping. When joining the ribs to the tubes, a die is placed inside the tubes, since the tubes may yield under the force applied by the punch. There is nothing to suggest employing projections in the Podhorsky et al. manufacturing method. Advantages achieved by using projections as specified by claim 2 above result from using projections designed specifically for crimping rather than direct crimping with cooperating members. Nothing in the disclosure provided by the Podhorsky et al. publication suggests modifying the Bleuel et al. device such that it is made by an assembly method including the “crimping” act or operation mentioned above.

It is respectfully submitted that a rejection of claim 2 above, based on the Bleuel et al., Fevre et al. and Podhorsky et al. disclosures relied on, would be inappropriate, and that claim 2 above is patentable over these disclosures.

Independent claim 2 is now also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with all dependent claims, as unpatentable over discussion set forth on pages 1-2 of the specification of this application, identified as “Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art (AAPA),” in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0043720 to

Sawada et al. and the newly applied Podhorsky et al. document. Reconsideration is requested.

Initially, the filing date of the present PCT U.S. national phase application is the February 19, 2003, filing date of International Application No. PCT/JP03/01782. The Examiner's attention is directed to 35 U.S.C. § 363, PCT Article 11(3), and MPEP 1893.03(b). This February 19, 2003, filing date is prior to any possible date on which the Sawada et al. publication is effective as a reference in the United States, and the rejection of claim 2 set forth in section 4 on pages 4-5 of the Office Action, based partly on the Sawada et al. publication, is inappropriate.

In the Podhorsky et al. heat exchangers, attachment of ribs to tubes is performed by crimping. Nothing in the Podhorsky et al. disclosure suggests modifying anything noted on pages 1-2 of this application such that it is made by an assembly method including the "forming," "temporarily fitting," and "crimping" acts or operations presently defined by claim 2.

It is respectfully submitted that a rejection of claim 2 above, based on the discussion appearing on pages 1-2 of this application and the Sawada et al. and Podhorsky et al. disclosures, would be inappropriate, and that claim 2 above is patentable over these disclosures.

U.S. Patent 5,573,606 to Evans et al. is additionally relied on as a further secondary reference to reject claim 6, but nothing in the Evans et al. disclosure suggests the limitations in claim 2 discussed above.

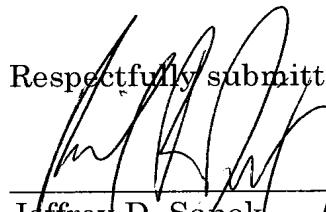
Claim 2 above is considered patentable for reasons discussed above. The rest of the claims remaining in this application are dependent claims and are considered patentable as well.

This application should now be in allowable condition. If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #038917.55521US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeffrey D. Sanok
Registration No. 32,169
Richard R. Diefendorf
Registration No. 32,390

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
JDS:RRD:rd